headmen, but might be exerted upon all the individuals in the unit.

Nothing more need be said at this point concerning the family, the guild, and the secret societies, for these are to be described in later chapters. It must be noted, however, that they were very important factors in local and—at times—in provincial and national administration. The village government had as its chief organs a council of elders or managers and a headman, the latter usually termed the *ti pao.* The council of elders was often made up of the leaders of the more important families and of the men who were generally recognized as having the most influence in the village—scholars, and those who had won esteem by their force of character, experience, and administrative ability. In some localities and times, however, these positions went to rich schemers or to men who used corrupt measures to attain them. As a rule no formal election seems to have been held, although in theory the elders were nominated by their fellow villagers and confirmed by the responsible magistrate, usually the *chih hsien.* Membership appears rather to have come through tacit recognition by public opinion. In theory the *ti pao* was chosen-by the magistrate and was the one through whom the village had-its communication with the official hierarchy. In at least some villages in the South, the village council was associated with the village temple. To the council of elders and the *ti pao* went such tasks as lighting the streets, maintaining the watchmen, builclmg and repairing dikes, constructing and maintaining the wall (if there was one), supervising markets, approving of all transfers of land, erecting and repairing temples, sinking and cleaning community wells, collecting the taxes and contributions

levied by the state, and adjusting disputes between fellow villagers or with other villages. Controversies which could not be settled in ~this manner might be taken to the magistrate, but such litigation was usually costly and prolonged and was entered upon only as a last resort. In some sections, it may be noted, tax collectors constituted an hereditary group, distinct from the *ti pao* and elders.

This organization of local government was to be found .not only in the villages but in the larger towns and cities, These were "rattaHy^ivided into wards, each with its counciLoLelders and its *ti pao* who functioned much as did those of the villages.